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CHRISTIAN ORDER is a monthly magazine devoted to the promulgation of Catholic Social Teaching and incisive comment on current affairs in Church and State; at home and abroad; in the political, social and industrial fields.

It is published by Father Paul Crane, S.J., from 65, Belgrave Road, London, S.W.1. This is the sole postal address to which all communications concerning *Christian Order* should be sent.

*Christian Order* is obtainable only by subscription and from this address. In the case of those desiring more than one copy, these are obtainable at the subscription rate and should be paid for in advance.

The annual subscription to *Christian Order* is £1 in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland; \$3.00 in the United States, Canada and Australia; elsewhere, according to the approximate sterling rate of exchange, in the currency of the country concerned or any convenient currency.

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# Christian Order

EDITED BY

Paul Crane S J

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VOLUME 12

December 1971

NUMBER 12

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## Christian Order and You

THE EDITOR

Readers have asked this past year how I have been able to keep the annual subscription to *Christian Order* at £1 and still survive. My answer has always been that it would be impossible to do so were it not for the prompt generosity with which readers renew their subscriptions. This is the key to survival. During the past year, the renewal rate to *Christian Order* has stood at 95 per cent. By any count this is admirable and it has meant, in fact, that the fall-off there has been through non-renewals has been well exceeded by the new subscriptions that have come in. As a result, there has been a steady net increase in circulation, which stands now at close on 2,700; a total made up almost entirely of single subscriptions as distinct from bulk orders, which are less than a tenth of the total number of copies sold each month and which have to be paid for in advance.

There is, therefore, a readership of *Christian Order* made up of those who not only take the magazine year after year, but who read it. I know this from the letters that come in to me and from comments sent when subscriptions are renewed. I am left with the feeling, which gives me much confidence and courage, that *Christian Order*

is deeply appreciated by readers for the help, thank God, it manages to give them. If further proof is wanted in this regard, it is found in the way in which readers, right through the year, are instrumental in persuading their friends to become subscribers. This is a very wonderful help and I cannot thank sufficiently those who have given it in such generous fashion. Astonishingly enough, *Christian Order* does not advertise because, for a variety of reasons, it is unable to do so. Yet it must gross like 400 to 500 new subscribers a year. How good readers are to engage in this wonderful work of promotion, given so spontaneously, and how grateful I am to them!

Once again this December, when I have a huge block of about 700 subscriptions to get in, I would ask those whose subscriptions fall due to send them to me, when they receive their reminders, *if possible by return of post* so that the whole business may be cleared well before Christmas. If this could be done, please, it would be an enormous help.

There are two further points. Firstly, people have been most generous this past year in sending something extra with their subscriptions. This has been the greatest help in face of rising costs and I have tried to thank personally all those who have done so. Could you continue, please, to help in this fashion? Secondly, enclosed with this number of *Christian Order* there is a form for a subscription to a friend of your choosing or, if you can think of no-one, for the Editor to use for a reader of his choosing. I have disposed of many such in the past and this has been due entirely to readers' generosity.

What this somewhat rambling editorial contains, then, is a three-fold request. In the first place and above all, that those whose subscriptions are due this month (December) should be so kind as to renew them without any delay. In minor key and secondly, donations, however small, would be much appreciated to help cover rising costs. Thirdly and finally, a subscription for a friend or a reader of the Editor's choosing is a way in which the circulation

of *Christian Order* can be extended as successfully this coming year as last.

Reading this editorial over I have the impression that I have done nothing but ask. Forgive me, please, and allow me to thank you, sincerely and with all my heart, for your most generous support in the past. May God bless you and your families this Christmas and throughout the year.

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### Casting Away Pearls

"We've been dropping certain things. When we drop them the world picks them up.

"We dropped the Rosary. The hippies adopted it. Nuns dropped their habits. Girls now wear maxis.

"We gave up mysticism. Young people took up dope. Nuns gave up community life. Young people started forming communes.

"We've not been giving Christ to the world.

"It is good to be pilloried because then we must examine our conscience. We must get to Christ. This will straighten out the Church and the rest will follow"  
Archbishop Fulton Sheen.



For some time now Catholic Progressives have been trying to bend the Catholic teaching on marriage to make it accord with the amoral inclinations and outlook of secular humanism. In this article, Denzil Galvin examines what Hans Kung, Morris West and Dr. Jack Dominian, in two series of articles in the "Tablet", have been saying on this matter.

## Catholic Progressives and Christian Marriage

DENZIL GALVIN

THE present divisive influences at work in the Church — to which Pope Paul with much anguish repeatedly draws attention — are basically due to a loss of faith among certain of the clergy and laity which is reflected in the breakdown of obedience to and reverence for the institutional Church and the voice of the *magisterium*. These Neo-Modernists or progressives in the Church who are affected by the values of the secular society of which they are a part, and who are impatient with the legitimate reform and renewal set in motion by Vatican II, have to justify their attitudes by resorting to the dialectical exercise of creating the myth of a Church still hidebound by "rigidity" and "legalism" against which they as the People of God are merely using their new-found freedom of criticism based on "conscience" and "co-responsibility".

### *Progressive Catholics and Secular Values*

The "institutionalism" and "dogmatism" in the Church, they say, must be revised to take into account the new understanding of man's nature and moral and social be-

haviour as discovered by modern science, psychology, sexology, etc. They produce persuasive theological and social arguments in support, whereas in fact their opinions when analysed, are purely subjective — arising as they do from the secular moral and social influence that impinge upon their own life experiences.

For example, the Catholic laity who object to the Church's ban on contraception are motivated more by their own personal experience of the convenience of artificial family planning however much they try to rationalise it by appealing to new "insights" in theology, science and the natural law. Similarly, the campaign to relax the Church's law on priestly celibacy is fundamentally a reflection of the general decline in discipline and dedication in secular society that has spilled over to affect the quality and character of some of the younger priests and student-priests in the Church. This pressure for an optional married clergy is also linked with a parallel tendency among certain theologians and lay people to emphasise the sociological rather than the sacral role of the priest in order to "democratise" his place in the hierarchy of the new (and much misused) concepts of the People of God and the Priesthood of the People.

The subtle influence of this secularised consensus morality and sociology upon members of the Church — not always confined to intellectuals and conscious progressives — is becoming more and more apparent in the attitude of some Catholics towards the Church's doctrine on marriage. It is no secret that there are many Catholic couples, especially in the affluent West, who openly disregard the teaching of the Church by resorting to divorce. In some so-called Catholic countries, notably in Italy, this outlook has snowballed over the years into formal recognition of divorce by the State. But behind all this there is developing a far more dangerous ground-swell of "liberal" thinking in the Church that is challenging her traditional teaching on marriage on theological and social grounds.

### *Criticism from Hans Kung*

When last year the Vatican promulgated the new laws on mixed marriages, it came as no surprise when that "darling" theologian of the progressives, Dr. Hans Kung, criticised the decree despite the concessions it made to the new "conscience" thinking in the Church. He described the new laws as "not yet bearing the imprint of the Gospel". He asserted that "people in the Church are no longer content to note 'fruitful openings for a solution'. They want the solution itself. In view of the millions of human beings hard-pressed in conscience and defamed by an irresponsible ecclesiastical legislation, it is no longer possible to wait in patience for a solution".

Turning to the whole question of Christian marriage in the future, Dr. Kung continued: "The fundamental question must be raised as to the real source from which Christian leaders derive the right to decide the validity and invalidity of marriages. In the light of modern theology such a right seems impossible to substantiate. According to the Roman decree itself 'man has the natural right to marry and beget children'. And it must be presumed that no bishop or pope can prevent two people from making use of this right. If recourse is had to the sacramental character of marriage to justify such a right to decide validity and invalidity, it may be replied that modern theology disputes how far marriage may be called a sacrament at all".

What is this "modern theology" to which Dr. Kung refers and since when did theologians instruct the *magisterium*? If there exists such a consensus of theologians disputing that marriage is a sacrament then it would be in direct conflict with the authentic teaching of the Church as defined by the Council of Trent and Vatican II's decree on the Pastoral Constitution on the Church (para 48). And when Dr. Kung questions the Church's right to decide the validity and invalidity of marriages, the ramifications of such a statement extend beyond the bounds of mixed marriages. Does he mean to imply that even in



the case of a marriage between two Catholics the judgment for deciding whether their marriage is no longer valid due to irretrievable breakdown is rested on them in the first place — and therefore if a Christian marriage no longer exists that the Church should regard the union as dissoluble?

### *Morris West Has a Go*

In his much publicised book, *Scandal in the Assembly*, the Catholic author, Morris West, appears to be thinking very much along the same lines. In an interview with *The Tablet* (May 9th, 1970), he goes to great pains to say that he is not attacking the Catholic doctrine on marriage but merely making “a Christian protest against certain legislation on marriage currently in force in the Church”. He then lets the progressive cat out of the bag. A Catholic couple (he says) may have outwardly entered into the full doctrine of Christian marriage — making the necessary vows in the ceremony — “but the affirmation may later prove to have been false or incomplete. The (Church) law at present takes no cognizance of that . . . what we say is that, when unions have demonstrably and irretrievably broken down, then a presumption is established, both legally and religiously, that either the intention or the capacity to create a perfect Christian union was not present. Therefore, the (Church) law can, with perfect reasoning, provide a means to dissolve those unions and enable the parties to contract other suitable unions in good conscience”.

One wonders whether to call this specious or just naive thinking? It is certainly question-begging. What is a *perfect* Christian marriage which constitutes a permanent union in the eyes of the Church — and what precisely are the imperfections that are supposed to create grounds for thinking that a true Christian marriage never really existed? Who decides the norms of an “irretrievable breakdown”? The evidence of one or both of the partners that the “intention or capacity to create a perfect Christian marriage”



never existed from the start? Morris West's line of thought displays an amazing disregard for weakness or collusion in human nature — and would open up an ever widening loop-hole in the Catholic doctrine on the indissolubility of marriage.

### *Dr. Dominican and Sex in Marriage*

Dr. Jack Dominican, a Catholic psychiatrist who finds himself quite at home in the progressive pages of *The Tablet*, wrote a series of articles in that journal (October to December 1970 and June-July 1971) on love, sex and marriage in relation to the teaching of the Church. His formula for a new conception of the Catholic doctrine on marriage seems to be a hybrid mixture of Christian and secular humanist values.

In his first series of articles Dr. Dominican asserts that modern insights from psychology, medical science and sociology have given a new dimension to the psycho-sexual relationship in marriage by "showing categorically that sex is a most powerful means of constructing, maintaining and reinforcing human bonds of affection and love". This must lead (he says) to a re-appraisal of earlier taboos and moral judgments in which the Church will have to make a new approach to the freshly revealed characteristics of love and sexual fulfilment in human relationships. He appears to attribute to the sexual act in marriage an intrinsic moral quality of its own, as if it were the vessel of the human psyche where love and integrity in the union were moulded. As he writes; "The instinctual now becomes the single most powerful means of serving and verifying the attachment of the couple. Through it, mutual trust, recognition, acceptance, appreciation and reconcillation — in short, love — are communicated. This loving, uniting potential in every act of sexual intercourse in marriage is the quality that needs fostering all the time since it lies at the very heart of the relationship".

It seems to me that Dr. Dominian's conclusions are based on the doubtful premise that sexuality furnishes the exemplar or pattern on which all behaviour and love in marriage is fashioned. Sexuality, however, is not the exemplar but the expression of a person's character and basic attitudes. Love is an act of the will; it does not lie in the instinct or glands. Love in marriage can include sex but it is not dependent on it. The conjugal act, regarded as a biological instinct, does not create love nor necessarily include it; one cannot give the flesh a moral value. Human love implies perfect love and needs only a glance, a caress or a disposition to express its up-welling in the soul.

In an age obsessed with sex it is only too easy for both "counsellor" and "patient" to equate the sexual act with love as the basis of marriage and to attribute the breakdown of the union to sexual incompatibility when the fault really lies in the character and personality of one or other of the partners.

### *Evidence to the Contrary*

The evidence from secular surveys on love and marriage is particularly significant. Thus the Royal Commission on Marriage and Divorce (1955), after pointing out that too much of modern psychology on marriage justifies self-expression as an end in itself, adds that as a result "there is in the popular mind an undue over-emphasis on the importance of a satisfactory sex relationship in marriage without a similar emphasis on the other stable and enduring factors of a lasting marriage". In their book *The Family and Marriage in a Changing World* (1965) the authors, K. Walker and O. Whitney, concluded: "The failure of a husband or wife to obtain satisfaction in the sexual plane of marriage is rarely in our view the main cause of breakdown" — and they go on to list defects of character in the partners as the primary cause.

Perhaps the most striking indication that sex is not regarded by ordinary people as the prerequisite for love

and harmony in marriage comes from a *Sunday Times* report on Sex and Marriage which, in March 1970, published the findings of a comprehensive survey of the opinions of married couples. Under the title, "What Tends to Make a Happy Marriage?", a percentage table of factors in order of importance, as answered by those interviewed, was headed by Comradeship (29%), Understanding (28%), Mutual Trust (20%) — with Sexual Compatibility way down at 5%. Another table reporting the factors considered to disrupt a marriage showed Neglect and Lack of Understanding (30%), Selfishness (25%), Infidelity (24%) — with Sexual Incompatibility rating only 10%. So much for the conclusions of our modern psycho-scientific "experts"!

### *Dr. Dominican and the Behavioural Sciences*

In his second series of articles Dr. Dominican dwelt more generally on what he calls the "changing nature" of marriage in the modern world and put forward two premises upon which he bases his plea for a reappraisal of Christian marriage. Firstly, the behavioural sciences, as applied to the social, physical, psychological and moral factors in marriage, will "assist us towards the understanding and translation into experience of the evolving nature of marriage". Secondly, he implies that up to now the Church has imposed a structural legalism on her doctrine of marriage instead of emphasising the deeper needs of human nature which would provide a truer norm for determining if the relationship really were a genuine Christian marriage in the sense of what he nebulously calls 'being truly human' and a 'realisation of potential'.

Now the behavioural sciences, within defined limits, have a valuable part to play in explaining the nature and kind of man in relation to his environment and in understanding and treating his mental and emotional needs and disorders arising out of the pressures of modern life. Today, however, most practitioners of the behavioural sciences, emanating as they do from a secular humanist philosophy of life, tend to project the results of their scientific studies as



substitute life-values or standards of moral and social conduct — as has happened, for instance, in the “revolutions” in marriage and divorce, contraception, abortion and sexual freedom generally. Unfortunately, these new “insights” or “values” instead of strengthening the timeless virtues of reverence, fidelity and self-discipline in these areas of human life, always seem to prepare the way for a lessening of these qualities with a view to meeting the needs of a subjective morality promising the fulfilment of a more “responsible” and “fuller” human experience. On their part, of course, the secular humanists and sociologists who thus apply the behavioural sciences to the human condition proceed on the assumption that the knowledge gained leads to a “liberation” from values based on an outmoded understanding of man’s true nature and needs.

### *Dr. Dominian’s Relativist Treatment of Marriage*

Dr. Dominian subjects the Catholic doctrine of marriage very much to this same relativist treatment when he writes about the “advances” in the psychological sciences which “through clarification and understanding of personal and inter-personal activity, should give Christians nothing but joy as we progress towards a greater realisation in understanding the nature of love”. He refers to the personal marital expectations of people “who will no longer tolerate levels which are incompatible with minimum human dignity and the realisation of human potential. Christianity has to assess these standards very carefully and consider at what level a marriage, despite its external appearances of having fulfilled the legal norms, can be truly called a marriage”. The mind wilts under Dr. Dominian’s outpouring of heavy verbiage — “translation into experience of the evolving nature of marriage . . . . clarification and understanding of inter-personal activity . . . . realisation of human potential”. Phrases with the high-sounding ring of scientific authenticity but signifying nothing. And it will come as news to many happily married Christian couple today (as it would have to their counterparts of yesteryear) that they have had to

wait "clarification" from the modern psychological sciences in order fully to understand, express and enjoy their love for each other!

### *Transcendental and Transient*

Surely, when it comes to a consideration of what Dr. Dominian calls "the evolving nature of marriage", one has to distinguish between, on the one hand, the essential "substance" of marriage which is the constant factor (outside time and place) of inherent human nature personified in the character and power of love of the marriage partners and, on the other, the "accidents" of the contemporary environmental and psychological situation in which a modern marriage has to operate and where only here may its "nature" be said to "change" or "evolve" under the influence of the prevailing secular *mores*. The Church, of course, knows that much of modern psychology and science can contribute towards a greater understanding of the mental and social complexities which press upon marriage, and that this knowledge can be used pastorally when dealing with personal marital problems. This is not to say that the "accidents" of secular society today — such phenomena as urban pressures on living, longevity, the changing pattern of work, women's "liberation", contraception, sexual freedom, etc. — which have been analysed and related to new humanist moral norms by the behavioural sciences, can in any way be taken to relax or modify the doctrine of the indissolubility of marriage as conceived by the Church under the divine mandate. In citing these contemporary social phenomena as factors of change in marriage, Dr. Dominian fails to make a distinction between the transcendental and the transient. For these social, moral and sexual patterns of conduct that have been woven into a secularist conception of marriage are not necessarily here to stay as if by some divine right; a cataclysmic war or some other universal upheaval could send us all back to the very fundamentals of life and marriage.

## *Bending the Magisterium*

Are we really to accept, as Dr. Dominian suggests, that the Church — which for centuries has been in intimate contact with the souls and minds of men—has developed a legalistic doctrine about the nature and indissolubility of marriage that hinders people from attaining what is described as their “full human experience” and “potential”? For one can talk about the advances in modern knowledge providing new “insights” into the nature of love and marriage; but are the partners in a modern marriage basically any different from their predecessors? Are not the viabilities in the relationship in today’s marriages as much governed by the constant human virtues and vices — understanding, mutual trust, restraint, selfishness, infidelity and incompetence — as were marriages over the ages? It is the failure of the partners to practise these virtues in marriage that really prevents the union from being “truly human” or attaining “potential”, not any deficiencies in the Church’s doctrine. Dr. Dominian’s approach to the subject is yet another example of the subtle attempt by progressives to “bend” the teaching of the *magisterium* to conform with the social and moral values of secular humanism. So far as Christian marriage is concerned we have not yet heard the last of it.



In a passage from the encyclical *Populorum Progressio* cited last month, Pope Paul lists a number of factors which make for a more human condition among men. One of these is "the turning towards the spirit of poverty". What is this "spirit of poverty"; how does it help people to be more human; and what has it to do with the quest for "as much as possible" so far as the goods of this world are concerned, of which I said something in my last two articles?

## The Spirit of Poverty

FRANCIS FENN, S.J.

THINK that we should begin by repeating (if that is necessary) that these "goods" are in fact good. Here shall follow *Gaudium et Spes*, the Vatican Council's document on the Church in the modern world:

"Throughout the centuries, men have laboured to better the circumstances of their lives through a monumental amount of individual and collective effort. To believers, this point is settled: considered in itself, such human activity accords with God's will." (34) the next section, the Council points out that

"just as human activity proceeds from man, so it is ordered toward man. For when a man works, he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well. He learns much, he cultivates his resources, he goes outside himself and beyond himself. Rightly understood, this kind of growth is of greater value than any external riches which can be garnered . . . Similarly, all that men do to obtain greater justice, wider brotherhood, and a more human ordering of

social relationships has greater worth than technical advances. For these advances can supply the material for human progress, but of themselves alone they can never actually bring it about" (see also the second paragraph of no. 57).

Central to human development is a growth in responsibility; but

"a man can scarcely arrive at the needed sense of responsibility unless his living conditions allow him to become conscious of his dignity, and to rise to his destiny by spending himself for God and for others. But human freedom is often crippled when a man falls into extreme poverty, just as it withers when he indulges in too many of life's comforts and imprisons himself in a sort of splendid isolation (31).

Such a one was the rich man of the gospel story, "who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day" while the destitute Lazarus lay at his gate. At death he had to lose the things he had made central in his life, but he also had to forfeit those other things ("to rise to his destiny by spending himself for God and for others") which he had never sought and whose reality he had never even admitted.

But if Dives (as we call him) lived on inherited wealth the rich fool of Luke 12 had worked for his riches and thought he was entitled to spend the rest of his days enjoying them. As it turned out, he *had* no more days. "So it is", says our Lord, "when a man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God" — rich, that is, because he has become "conscious of his dignity" as a man. It is what a person is (becomes) that matters, rather than what he has.

Yet to be "rich in the sight of God" is, paradoxically, to recognise our poverty — because we understand our complete dependence on Him. This was true (above all) of our Lord:

"His state was divine, and yet he did not cling

his equality with God (his Father) but emptied himself to assume the condition of a servant, and became as men are . . . . He was rich, but he became poor for your sake, to make you rich out of his poverty (Phil. 2,6; 2 Cor. 8,9).

This "poverty" was the human condition which he shared with us; but he also chose to live as a poor man since this was an effective sign of his dependence on his Father. Material poverty accepted or freely embraced has therefore been blessed by the Church — a blessing which does not extend to destitution. (On this see Walter Shewring's introduction to *Rich and Poor in Christian Tradition* : though published as long ago as 1947, this book is still of value.)

"How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (The other seven beatitudes in Matthew 5 refer to the same *kind* of people; not to different *groups* of people.) The use of *poor* in this sense was by no means new: what is new is that the kingdom or reign of God for which the *poor* have been looking has now arrived, in the person of Jesus (see Matthew 11,5 & Luke 4,18).

Unfaithfulness to their covenant with God was so rampant among the people of Israel in the time of the kings who followed David and Solomon that the prophets no longer looked on the whole people as inheritors of God's promises. These would now belong to a small group — "the remnant of Israel" — still faithful and waiting for the fulfilment of God's mercy. Perhaps it was the humiliating situation brought about by the Assyrian invasion that led the prophet Zephaniah (c. 640) to speak of this remnant in terms of poverty and need:

"I will remove your proud boasters from your midst . . . . I will leave a poor and needy (*or* humble and lowly) people, the remnant of Israel; and they shall hope in the name of Yahweh."

The use of such terms in the Psalms and the later chapters of Isaiah cannot be understood unless we have in mind



the "poor in spirit". Shewring (p.11) says that in such passages "the word *poor* is extended beyond its common significance to mean anyone, of whatever status, who is in distress of any kind, material or spiritual"; but a reading of Albert Gelin's *The Poor of Yahweh* (1963) leads me to believe that it includes anyone who recognises his needy human condition and trusts in God — though for most of us this will be more clearly realised in actual distress. The words of Jesus in the New Testament answer the hope of the "poor" in the Old: "Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest . . . . Learn of me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" — and they apply to anyone with ears to hear. But as Jesus taught, this hearing will be short-lived if the word is choked by "delight in riches" (Matt. 13,22).

Whereas in her Magnificat <sup>(1)</sup> Mary says that God "has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden", the Pharisee in Luke 18 thanks God that he is not as other men and recites his virtues. He typifies those whom we may call the "rich in spirit", the self-sufficient (see Revelation 3,17). Closed in upon himself, there was no opening through which grace could enter. But the "publican" or tax-collector (like Zacchaeus in Luke 19 probably quite well-off) had the soul of a poor man, open to God. "Modern man" tends to be self-sufficient, though on different grounds. But even the unbeliever may be able to understand that self-centredness is less than human — and this is what the single-hearted quest for material goods leads to (see *Populorum Progressio*, 19).

This is not to say that only professing Christians (or even all of *them*) are free from the love of money and what money can buy. The quest for "more and more" is rather the sickness of our whole "affluent society" — a sickness which, when exported, corrupts those in the less developed countries who have the power to make it their own. About the president of one of these countries I have recently read these chilling words:

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(1) Gelin has a chapter on *Mary and her Song of Poverty*.

"He believes people should be rich. He believes in possessions. He feels that if the white man can come to (his country) and see how the President lives, dresses, behaves, then the white man will know that somebody else can do it as well as he can."

Perhaps, as the newspaper suggests, this is too simple a judgement of the man. But it need hardly be said that, apart from a few affluent showpieces, little effort is being made to lift the mass of people in his country above their poor conditions of life. And (are you too much surprised?) "he is a devout Catholic and goes to Mass every Sunday."

*Gaudium et Spes* has a strong criticism of countries at least nominally Christian which have an abundance of goods while looking with complacency (one might say self-centredness) at others deprived of the necessities of life. "For the spirit of poverty and charity are the glory and authentication of the Church of Christ" (88). Elsewhere the document gives encouragement to Christians who "take an active part in modern socio-economic development and defend justice and charity". In faithfulness to Christ,

"they should observe the right order of values in their earthly activities. Thus their whole lives, both individual and social, will be permeated with the spirit of the beatitudes, notably with the spirit of poverty" (72).

It is important that we understand what we mean by this "spirit of poverty" and do not use it as a mere catch-word. I have argued that it means a recognition of our poverty as human beings and a confidence that God will meet our needs, spiritual and temporal. It rescues us from that anxiety or worry about which our Lord warned us and to which the man who "trusts in riches" must needs be subject (Matt. 6,25-34). But there is more to it than that. God has answered our need by the offer of his eternal kingdom, already active in our midst. "Set your hearts on his kingdom", says our Lord. This is the

“pearl of great value” for which we must be prepared to give up all else.

But the law of this kingdom is above all the law of charity: the giving not only of what we have but of ourselves as well to meet the need of our fellow-men. If this law is the rule of our lives, it will provide a “shining example” (to use the Council’s words) to those of our neighbours who think that human happiness consists in *having* as much as possible.

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## Human Behaviour and Christianity

“We’ll never get human behaviour in line with Christian ethics,” these gentlemen must have argued, “so let’s adapt Christian ethics to human behaviour. Then at least there’ll be some connexion between them.” But I can’t see what good they’ve done. They’ve merely enabled people to sin with a clear conscience. . . (Book One, pp. 64-65, *Utopia*, Thomas More, translated for Penguin Classics by Paul Turner, 1965).



## CURRENT COMMENT

In his address on the second day of the Synod, Cardinal Heenan called for holy priests. His words found confirmation in a report issued by Mgr. Buckley of Woodhall, which summarized the views of young committed Christians on this matter.

So far as the pursuit of social justice is concerned, it is by no means enough to see it in terms of freeing the world's poor from want, fear and misery. And it is quite wrong to identify it, as some of the South American bishops appear to do, with approbation of Socialist forms of society.

# In Praise of Father O'Flynn

## THE EDITOR

**F**EW will have failed to agree with the note struck by Cardinal Heenan when he addressed his fellow bishops in Rome last October on the second day of the Synod. His words are well worth recording:

"It would be wrong for this synod to spend most of our time on the priesthood to the neglect of our discussion on justice and peace.

"We must not give the impression that most priests are in doubt about the meaning of the ministerial priesthood. The times are grave. We should not give most of our attention to clerical problems which have already attracted too much notice.

"Press, radio and television have a fascination for sex in every form. Matrimonial and clerical infidelity are equally attractive to the mass media.

"Protesting priests are not typical of their brethren.

Most priests are not crying out for freedom from discipline, freedom from daily Mass and Divine Office, freedom from vestments and chastity.

"Most priests cry out, if at all, for greater spiritual help in their priestly lives. Let us give our attention not to our brothers in the priesthood but to our brothers in Christ who are seeking freedom from want, fear and misery.

"The message that should go from this synod is of the great need for the sanctification of bishops and priests. If we are holy the laity will follow us . . . a holy priest will make a holy people.

"If the Church is holy it will be strong to work for justice and peace in the world. Hence the two subjects are one. Through holy priests the poor of the world will be saved."

### *The Essence of Father O'Flynn*

The Cardinal's sentiments found confirmation in Mgr. Michael Buckley's presentation of a point made generally by groups of young committed Christians who had been attending leadership-training courses at Woodhall, Wetherby, Yorkshire. It was that the rebellion of the young against the Church was really a rebellion against the secularization of the clergy (religious very much as well as secular priests) and their attitudes; that what these young people wanted above all else was that the Church and its priests should be holy. In other words and with respect to my fellow Jesuit, Father John Harriott (*Catholic Herald*, 8/10/71), what they *do* want now — young as well as old — is Father O'Flynn; not with his rough edges, perhaps, or those other marks which were characteristic of his age, but with that great and glorious and intensely humble substance of holiness which was the essence of himself. A man in touch with God and whose day was bound up effortlessly with Christ and His Mother, a man whose loyalty to Christ's Church was fierce and enduring; who was closely in touch with his people precisely because he was in touch

with Christ our Lord — that was Father O'Flynn. With him, as with Christ his Lord, it was a case of "*virtus de illo exivit*"; there flowed from him, as there did from Christ, the radiance that holiness alone can give and it was that — in the case of Father O'Flynn as in the case of Christ — that drew men to himself. The whole point about Father O'Flynn is that he knew where his strength lay; from where alone he could take it. He sought its source in God alone. This is what cut him off from the progressive priests of today. They are far cleverer than he ever was. As Father Harriott says, they have "come better equipped theologically and sociologically" — but they are without his wisdom because unable to trace the source of their strength as wholly in God; over-inclined, in fact, to seek it somewhat absurdly in themselves and their own supposedly clever ways. Father O'Flynn succeeded where they most certainly will fail because God, not himself, was his all and the muttered prayers, so often on his lips, were constantly in recognition of that.

### *The Need for Holiness*

To think of Father O'Flynn — to quote Father Harriott once again — as in touch only with "a cosy coterie of the devout" is to misunderstand not merely the need for holiness today, but the normal manner of its operation on others. One might as well accuse Christ of wasting His time because He spent the major part of His life at Nazareth known only to a few village people. With respect, once again, the argument is about "prayer and holiness and a spirit of dedication" and the point made by many today — including the young at Woodhall — is that though new methods are indeed no substitute for any or all of these, they continue nevertheless to be held up in this capacity by progressive priests and religious in a manner that is not only offensive, but contrary to the wishes of the great majority of the Faithful. It was evident, reported Mgr. Michael Buckley, that youth had a sneaking fear that the Church was out for the best of both worlds, whereas they

themselves wanted true holiness of life not only preached but lived by all Christians, especially priests. Youth was afraid that too many priests merely scratched the surface of their particular problems without entering into their minds. This was due not so much to a lack of training on the part of priests as to a failure to realise that a priest must lift people up to Christ. In other words, holiness; which is precisely what Father O'Flynn had; which is why the essence of himself can never be out of date.

### *Social Justice and the Relief of Poverty*

In the opening words of his speech at the Synod to which reference has already been made, Cardinal Heenan said: "The one theme of our discussion concerns the desperate misery of the poor and the other so-called crisis in the priesthood". Are we to infer from the first half of this sentence that the English Cardinal identifies the pursuit of justice in the world with the relief of poverty? To do so, I am sure, would be to misinterpret his mind completely. Social justice is concerned with every man's God-given right to the opportunity of gaining a decent sufficiency — in the shape of food, shelter and clothing — for himself, his wife and his children. He has this right because he and his family are meant to serve God. They do this to the extent that they grow into true human beings with the help of God's grace and through the use of their human powers. Men and women are meant, in other words, to choose their way forward through life towards God and take as their own — carry responsibility for — the choices they make as human beings. To do this adequately — in human fashion — they need a sufficiency of food, shelter and clothing. It follows that they have the right to the opportunity of gaining such a sufficiency in freedom — not in slavery, not as proletarians living on the doled-out bounty of others, but freely and responsibly as befits human beings who are by nature free and meant — in fact, obliged — to make their way freely through life towards God.



### *Sufficiency only in Support of Freedom*

Out of this brief analysis comes one simple point. Man has a right to a sufficiency in order that and only in order that he may be free. From which it follows that there is no point and, so far as I can see, less morality in a system — however well-intentioned — that gives him a sufficiency at the price of taking altogether or—more likely—eroding over the years his inclination to choose his own way forward through life and assume responsibility for the choices which are his as a human being. It can never be stressed sufficiently that men have a right to a sufficiency *only in support of their freedom*: therefore, to demand freedom in return for — as the price of — a sufficiency is to defeat the whole purpose of social justice. The same effect, of course, will be had over the years when aid on a world scale is given in such a fashion that men lose the inclination to help themselves, grow disinclined to take responsibility for their own lives precisely because others show themselves so willing to take this responsibility on themselves when they are proletarianized through feckless and indiscriminate giving that contents itself merely with feeding and clothing the inhabitants of developing countries instead of concentrating, as it should, on the business of helping them to feed and clothe themselves. The distinction is not a subtle one. Unfortunately, it is seen by so few. As a result, too much aid is given to the developing countries, for example, on a merely quantitative basis; indiscriminately, that is, and without regard to its function which should be in support of human dignity and not in spite of it.

### *Relief and the Corporal Works of Mercy*

One can write the above, of course, and realise at the same time the need that remains everywhere for the corporal works of mercy. No one in his senses would deny that Catholic Relief Organizations must go to the aid of those struck down by war, cyclone, earthquake, famine, fire and flood. Under such circumstances there can be no immediate

talk of man's development as a human being; the essential thing to do is to save his human life. The corporal works of mercy will always be with us; so, too, will the disaster operations. What I am trying to stress here, however, and in the light of man's rights in social justice which are his *only* as a human being possessed of human powers, is that aid, under normal circumstances, *should not be seen* as an extension of the corporal works of mercy or the normalization, if you like, of a disaster operation. Aid is in aid of human dignity; in support, that is, of man's right to live like a responsible human being, making his own way forward in freedom under God. A decent material sufficiency is essentially in aid of this process, not in spite of it; and it is on this ground and this alone that every man has a right to the opportunity of gaining it. Cardinal Heenan called in his timely speech at the Synod for "freedom from want, fear and misery". His Eminence will forgive me the impertinence of observing that his words could be said to describe not inaccurately the situation of a well fed chimpanzee in the London Zoo. But man is not a chimp. That is the whole point about him. There is more, far more, to the human condition than that. The freedom we seek for a human being is the freedom to be most truly himself, and aid is valid only to the extent that it is in support of that. During recent years in the Church we have stressed the need to give. We have thought of the problem of aid too much in quantitative terms, of ever - increasing amounts to be given to developing countries. The time has come long since to be far more discriminating; to think in terms not only or, even, primarily of quantity, but of the use to which aid should be put, the basic purpose it is meant to serve; of quality, that is of the kind of society we should help our brothers in the developing countries build with the aid we direct towards them. The society we work for can only be one whose basic institutions are geared to the support of human dignity, of man's right, called for by his obligation to serve God as a human being, to the opportunity

of making his own way forward in freedom under God. It is in support of this process that social justice lays its commands on us all and bids us allocate resources of men, money and material at home and abroad.

### *Mother Teresa*

This is the present, urgent need — to allocate aid in aid of dignity. I wonder how many are in recognizance of it. I would think very few. The immense popularity enjoyed at present by the wonderful Mother Teresa—whom may God preserve — is due, I fear, not only or even primarily to the dedicated holiness of herself and her sisters, but to the thought of so many Catholics that this, in fact, is what aid is all about; that the call of social justice is met completely by the kind of operation Mother Teresa does so superbly well; that the purpose of aid, in other words, is not to build a just society, but to relieve the misery thrown up by one that is unjust; that aid, in other words, is no more than relief; that the shaping of society, by implication, remains a secular task, whilst the misery brought by secular shaping is a matter for Christian relief. One need only note, in refutation, that eighty years of Catholic Social Teaching expounded by seven great Popes — and very largely neglected by bishops, priests and people — bears witness, not against Mother Teresa, but the view of so many that her work comprises the *whole* or, even, the major part of the operation commanded by social justice. What the Popes have told us over the years is that the Church must be concerned primarily with the positive shaping of society to meet the claims of human dignity. The almost total neglect of this positive teaching by bishops, priests and faithful has been one of the great tragedies of modern times.

### *Socialist Ground-swell in the Church*

Neglect within the Church over the years of the social teaching of successive Popes accounts no doubt for the ground-swell at all levels within the Church today in

favour of various species of Collectivist Socialism. The swell is at all levels and, though it strikes me as due in the main to a somewhat unlovely combination of ignorance, naivete and opportunism, I have little doubt but that there are, within the Church, progressive pressure groups anxious and working extremely hard to identify the Catholic social ideal with that of a Marxist - Socialist Society. It is understandable, of course, that members of such groups should want such an ideal and work for it. For, they are to no small extent progressive in doctrine largely because, however subconsciously, they seek popularity within secular circles that are dominated by the advocates of a permissive society and it is a known fact that, within such circles, you find the strongest advocates not only of doctrinaire Socialism, but of Marxism as well. To be fully accepted, therefore, within avant-garde, secularist circles, progressive clerics and laymen within the Church must seek to identify its social ideal with what I would not hesitate to describe as that of the doctrinaire Socialism of the permissive, secularist society whose approbation they crave.

### *South American Bishops and Socialism*

On the side of naivete and ignorance and opportunism, it is, I think, no coincidence that calls for the Church to identify its social ideal with that of Socialism should have come increasingly from Latin America in recent years. This is understandable enough for, however unforgiveably, until a few years ago, the Church in that Continent had found herself—largely as a result of historical circumstance—part and parcel of an Establishment which paid scant regard to the claims of social justice. One reason for this, of course, which is often forgotten, is that the South American Church was largely without priests and those who came from abroad, particularly from the United States, gave the appearance too often, however worthy their intention, of being little more than the clerical arm of "Yankee imperialism". The real truth of the matter is that all priests in South America — from home as well as



abroad — were relatively very few and so unable to do more than minister to the barest spiritual needs of the thousands they cared for. They suffered, moreover, from the almost total ignorance of Catholic Social Teaching that has afflicted so many missionaries in the past and continues to afflict them today. Here is something I have not found easy to understand in the past and that I continue to find it difficult to understand in the present. I refer to what appears as the continuing inability of missionary orders and congregations to select at least a few of their members for instruction in those great principles, laid down by seven great Popes, which are essential to the true growth of any society. It is the more remarkable that this should still be the case today when the developing world is on the move and needs more than anything else, perhaps, the impact of Catholic Social Teaching on its evolving form. The opportunity is enormous. Yet, we are so blind in the Church that we refuse to take it. I know how tragic is this state of affairs in English-speaking Africa, at least, and I could say much about elsewhere. Particularly in South America where Catholic Social Teaching is most needed — to say nothing of the strategy essential to give it concrete impact on the lives of the people — neither priests nor laity have been found in any kind of significant numbers to proclaim the Catholic social message to the people of that Continent and apply it to their needs. And the tiny few who tried were silenced as often as not by National Hierarchies content with the role of the Church as little more than a decorative adjunct of a reactionary status quo, with no significant impact of any sort on the social condition of the people.

### *An Emotive Document*

Small wonder, in consequence, that, having been prodded at last into activity; having realized now, at the twenty-fifth hour, that some sort of revolution is under way, Bishops of that Continent — not all, but a not insignificant few, along with a much larger group of priests

—should now be summoning the Faithful to come out in support of a Socialist Society. To be understood, this present clerical stance must be set against an historical background of episcopal inertia in the social field and what one can charitably assume, despite notable exceptions, to be an almost total ignorance of the essentials of Catholic Social Teaching and practice on the part of South American Hierarchies. Consequently, what we have now is a very typical over-reaction in the present against the inertia of the past. Its dangerously emotive tone is well illustrated in a document prepared by the Peruvian Bishops for the Synod last October. Here is an example :

“The Gospel cannot be announced in a situation of oppression. . . .

“If the Church remains aloof from the anguish of men, it risks not being worthy of them.

“Let the Church sustain governments that aim at constructing a Socialist society, with a human and Christian content . . . . Let it condemn the repressive methods of governments that, in the name of Christian civilisation, have recourse to violence and torture.

“Let the Church recognise the right of the oppressed to fight for justice. Let it express solidarity with their ideals, even though it does not always approve their methods.”

### *Socialism as Ideal and Reality*

The confusion of thought in the above, if I may say so with respect, is appalling. Doubtless the Peruvian Bishops are thinking of Socialism as an *ideal* in the same way that British Socialists think of it as an ideal when they sing of building a new Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land. But the *reality* is a very different thing, as any intelligent European Catholic of whatever condition, who has lived under Doctrinaire Socialism in its Marxist or, indeed — if one can put it this way — non-Marxist form, will be quick to explain. “No Catholic”, said Pius XI in *Quadragesimo Anno*, “can be at one and the same

time a Catholic and a Socialist properly so called". So far as I know that injunction has never been rescinded. If the Peruvian or any other bench of Bishops wants to be true to the social teaching of the Church, the last thing they should do is advocate the pursuit by Catholics, as a social ideal, of a form of society already condemned by previous Popes as contrary, in essence, to the legitimate demands of human nature, which it is the business of the Catholic Church to defend and uphold. Those who know and understand the social teaching of that Church are very well within their rights when they express their resentment at those within it, however highly placed, who advocate ideals and policies that go clean contrary to the dignity of man, which seven Popes since 1891 have made it their business to uphold and defend.

One can only assume that Hierarchies within the Church today who advocate Doctrinaire Socialism as an appropriate Christian social ideal, speak out of ignorance or panic. The remedy for the former is clear enough. So far as the latter is concerned, one can only say that the spectacle of Bishops grasping at the coat-tails of socialist revolution, with a view, presumably, to maintaining for the Church a place in a supposed new order of things, is not only extremely unedifying, but indicative of a policy certain to end in disaster. The worst, perhaps, that could be said about such a policy is that it represents no change from previous days: in either case, the main endeavour of the Church is not to influence the shape of society in favour of human dignity and human rights, but to maintain herself in being whoever is in possession of political power. Could it be that now, in South America, sniffing the revolutionary air and anticipating a change at establishment level, Bishops are seeking no more than a place, little different from the old, within a new revolutionary order? Is self-preservation the real motive behind present episcopal cries in support of Socialism in South America? I hope not or, if this is the case, the Church in that Continent has learnt nothing from the past.

As consumers we all surely would like protection from fraud, price fixing, trick packaging, the sale of diseased meat: that is what Naderism is about.

## Nader and Naderism

E. L. WAY

"IT is demonstrable that things cannot be otherwise than they are", said Dr. Pangloss; and again "private misfortunes constitute the general good; so that the more private misfortunes there are, the whole of society is the better." In short, Dr. Pangloss could prove, at the drop of an executioner's hat, that this was the best of possible worlds. Pangloss was Voltaire's caricature of the philosopher Leibniz who left two systems of philosophy: the one public, which he published for princes, was optimistic, orthodox and ridiculous; the other was private and is considered coherent and profound. The popular doctrine proclaimed that this is the best of all possible worlds, to which Bradley added the acid comment "and everything in it is necessary evil".

The Dr. Panglosses of this world are well-heeled, have three square meals a day, with a nice long holiday in the summer and with long breaks at Christmas and Easter, are given to declaiming against materialism to those 27 millions in the U.K. and the U.S.A. who are below the official government poverty line, will live to 85 on a more than adequate pension, and will preach till they die that in a system in which they fare so well "things cannot be otherwise than they are".

### *Nader*

Ralph Nader is no Pangloss. He and Claire, Shaf and Laura are the four children of Nadra and Rose Nader.



The father emigrated from the Lebanon when that country was under the iron hand of the Turks. Ralph Nader became the famous consumer's advocate in Washington D.C. and heads the team known as *Nader's Raider's*. He has won notable victories: the out of court settlement of \$425,000 which General Motors paid him last year made the Americans sit up and gasp. (Clare Nader is a social scientist at Oak Ridge, Tenn., whose specialty is international relations, but who is now working on the social implications of science and technology. Concern and responsibility for others might well be the family motto.)

Ralph Nader believes that democracy does not consist merely in going to the polls on election day every four or five years. He asks bluntly: "Do you believe in free private enterprise?" And if you answer: "Of course I do", he will reply: "Good, then let us make it really free by getting rid of the cartels, price fixers and monopolists, and let those who preach private enterprise abstain from taking enormous government subsidies." His teams have investigated old people's nursing homes (of which I wrote in *Christian Order* in August this year), Banks, the food trade (and mentions such horrors as cancerous tumors being sold for food), and they have taken out a \$15 lawsuit to halt the Treasury's fast tax write off depreciation allowance to big business which it is estimated would save the taxpayer from forking out to big firms \$3.5 billion a year for ten years.

### *Antitrust*

Nader said in June this year: "If you took a poll on the corner of Main Street, U.S.A., I'll bet not one in 100 people would even know the meaning of the word 'anti-trust' ". In *The Closed Enterprise System* (1,156-page volume), Nader's Center for the Study of Responsive Law has published a report on the so-called free enterprise system in which it is shown that illegal price fixing, collusion, and market concentration are rampant. The Justice Department is accused of pursuing trivial cases and

small people and being most reluctant to go after the guilty big boys. And the main thing about Nader is that he does not generalise: he gives documentation. For example, the former antitrust chief, Donald Turner, is cited as ignoring his staff's recommendations to sue the oil, auto and copper industries but filing instead a case against the marketeers of bull semen. The Justice Department was also accused of failing to act against two powerful West coast publishing chains although it had "clear documentary evidence of an illegal conspiracy to fix prices and divide up the market". But the real weaknesses of the trust buster are shortage of staff and shortage of money. How can a professional staff of 354 police a \$ trillion economy on a budget of \$11.4 million? Nader proposes as a remedy a new agency with a \$100 million budget as well as a new law to break up large existing concentrations in industry throughout the United States. The report concludes that the free enterprise system and the laws to bust the trusts are just like the concepts of equal justice and racial freedom that Americans talk about but that "they may never permit to exist".

### *In Britain*

Back-of-envelope calculations have suggested that in Britain the cost of monopoly can scarcely be less than £4,000 million a year. A large share of the U.K. costs of monopoly results from decisions made in the 1960s which were originally justified on grounds of meeting foreign competition or of maintaining national control of our affairs. Will the cost of some of these monopolies be cut when we go into open competition in an enlarged community? Given the larger market what could antitrust legislation achieve at home?

At a much simpler and everyday level is the swindling of the ordinary customer. A woman, for example, buys a pair of sandals for £10 and they fall to pieces in a couple of weeks. The shopkeeper told her that her hot feet must have melted the glue. Had it not been for the T.V. cameras and the investigator doing his bit, that woman

would have been swindled out of £10. And what about the cars worth hundreds of pounds with the rust eating its way through the more difficult to observe parts? Why can we not get Consumer advocacy units? Why can't these frauds upon the public be exposed to the merciless criticism they deserve? There is far too much secrecy in England in government and industry. Consumerism is in the doldrums. The Consumer Council at the cost of about a penny per person per year did a great job and was popular so was put out of existence by this government. The reasons given were that other consumer groups had proliferated, and with everybody so well protected there was no need for government money to duplicate the effort. So out went the Consumer Council which was a pioneer watchdog for consumers. The Consumer Association remained, but it exists to publish product-testing results rather than as a badly needed vigilante for defrauded consumers.

### *Nader in Britain*

At the moment of writing, Ralph Nader, the sleepless gadfly of all those who charge too much for trick-packaged goods and slipshod car manufacturers, has arrived in England. (The sleepless is nearly accurate; he sleeps about four or five hours a night.) He was written off in *The Times*: 'We can't afford Nader'. The profiteers obviously can't. But any followers of Nader who wish to protect the customer here will be up against the barriers of secrecy: the kind of information that his team ferretted out in Washington is protected by the Official Secrets Act. And industrial security is very tight also, how else could Rolls Royce going downhill six years ago have kept this information even from the government? And what about the Vehicle and General Insurance company — consumers were taking out policies when the firm was all but finished. Mr. Nader has not only attacked Rolls Royce, Jaguar, MG, Triumph and Austin-Healey as British cars that have been put off the American highways for deficiencies by

the U.S. Department of Transportation, he also has had a word for toxic soaps, paint and air pollution.

### *A Sad Thought*

Will Naderism work in Britain? One doubts it, government and industry are too powerful to be deflected by mere nagging. Even the comparatively mild standards of the Consumer Council were found too uncomfortable by our industrial producers. Some of them like premium pricing: putting a higher price on shoddy rubbish to help the packaging give it an aura of superior quality. And are not many trading associations really pricing rings? After the closing down of the Consumer Council, its Director, Dame Elizabeth Ackroyd, remarked: "The Council was set up to secure presentation of the consumer viewpoint at high national levels. Perhaps we did it too outspokenly. It's a sad thought". The Panglosses of Freedom Enterprise Inc. rejoiced. But remember that it was not a communist or a labourite who said that merchants rarely come together even for the most innocent of pleasures without it ending in a conspiracy against the public. It was Adam Smith. (In closing one wonders why the exhibition of nudes in motor shows is not condemned by our moralists.)

Meanwhile in the U.S. a House Bill created in October a Consumer Protection Agency (voting 344 for, 44 against). It has been attacked on the one hand as a complete sellout to business and on the other it has been hailed as a new deal for the consumer. The bill in fact goes right down the middle of the road. The Senate last year passed a much tougher version of this bill (by 74 votes for, 4 against) and may shoot down the House version altogether. Nader described the House version as "a consumer fraud". The Agency will be allowed by the bill to present testimony, cross-examine witnesses, and appeal for decisions by regulatory agencies, in the course of all hearings, *except* those in which the agencies are trying to penalize persons and organizations charged with violating the federal law. The exception turns the Agency into a toothless bulldog.



The international news media have recently carried disturbing stories of violent upheavals in several Italian cities, and of a continuing crisis of government. No solution to this seems to be in sight.

M. Georges Albertini, who is the Editor of the Paris periodical "Est-Ouest", and an expert on international affairs, analyses the role of the Italian Communist Party in this drama. This article is reprinted here by courtesy of our Australian contemporary, "Social Survey", which published it last June.

# Italian Politics and Italian Communists

Take-over by Stealth

GEORGES ALBERTINI

THE political situation in Italy is constantly worsening. The big international news agencies have suddenly realized that Italy could become a European Chile. That is, as in Chile, power could legally fall into the hands of the extreme left, in this case, the PCI (Italian Communist Party), which would be the hard core of a new coalition government. Looking at the situation superficially, such a comparison is understandable and, when C. L. Sulzberger, in two articles appearing in the Paris edition of the *International Herald Tribune* (November 23, 1970, and January 13, 1971), did just that, he had the good sense to expose the issue clearly.

However, he made the mistake of using an ill-chosen pun as the title of one of his articles, one which only detracts from the serious nature of the situation ("Spaghetti

with Chile Sauce”), and of presenting an analysis of the Italian situation that was too sketchy to support a convincing comparison of the type intended. In attempting to shed some light on the situation, he only obscured it and, in so doing, played into the hands of Mr. Agnelli, the president of Fiat, who replied, not in defence of the extreme Left (hardly!) but as an Italian aggrieved at seeing his country’s dilemma evaluated in what seemed to him such a superficial manner.

### *Not Chile*

Italy is certainly not Chile. But if that point should be made, we must also note that, even though what happened in Chile may not happen in Italy, it does not mean that an equally serious situation may not evolve. The purpose of this article is to show that this is so.

The serious disturbances that have been on the increase in Italy for nearly three years have been brought on by the activities of movements and small factions of all allegiances which themselves are more leftist than the PCI. They create these disturbances to destroy the present Italian society, force the Communists to follow them and prove to the masses (as they put it) that the PCI’s reluctance or refusal to participate in terrorist or violent tactics demonstrates that it is no longer a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist party. For three years, leftist movements have constantly worked toward these goals. They have also forced organizations much more powerful than their own — communist - dominated unions, Socialists, the Christian Democrat left wing on the one hand, and on the other, the PCI and sometimes the PSI (Italian Socialist Party) — to resort to a form of quasi revolutionary action.

While large-scale demonstrations, general strikes and renewed paralysis of the public services are not to be compared with leftist riots, they have nonetheless contributed to the destruction of governmental authority. In that sense, it is true that the movements which claim to be more

leftist than the PCI have forced the latter and its allies to redouble the impact of their blows against the regime and make it more difficult to repress the disorders.

### *Regionalization*

Elsewhere, disorders have been on the rise due to the regionalization of the country, one of the basic communist and socialist demands that left-of-centre governments, either through weakness or swayed by demagoguery, have accepted and which is in process of inflicting mortal blows on the regime. As one might easily imagine, in a country with little national tradition and where the efforts first of Cavour, later of the House of Savoy, and finally of Mussolini did not succeed in actually creating a nation (in the sense that England, Holland, France or Sweden may be called nations), regionalization has resulted in an increase in the number of serious disturbances, intractable rivalries between cities, and the dismemberment of essential state functions.

### *Extreme-Right Response*

This situation, tragically illustrated by the anarchy reigning in Calabria, has had the additional effect of inducing the extreme Right to defend itself with the same violence the extreme Left is trying to inflict on Italy. In fact, in the South, where regionalization has given rise to extremely serious rioting, the Right is much stronger than it is elsewhere, and the Left, quite the contrary, being much less well organized than it is in the Po Valley. Thus, regionalization has offered the extreme right a field where it can give battle in response to the violent tactics of the extreme Left, which, as nobody can deny, have been unleashed by the latter on the peninsula.

The cries of "Fascism" raised to explain the MSI's attitude are meaningless, given the situation. Of course, we do not deny that the extreme Right, now rallying for the first time in a decade about the MSI and its new leaders, is answering violence with violence along with all the dangers to which such a confrontation may expose the

country. We need only remember that it is the extreme Left which is responsible for unleashing these violent attacks. And by its guilty abdication of responsibility in the field of regional politics, the Government has created an opportunity for the extreme Right to involve itself also in this perilous adventure. In face of these disorders, the Government has practically resigned. For example, the declarations made by the Prime Minister, Mr. Colombo, on his visit to Paris, confirmed the great confusion that reigns among the leaders. This confusion is to be explained not by the mediocrity of certain individuals, but by the inherent weaknesses of Italian institutions. There is no point in analyzing the causes and effects of the Italian governmental crisis once again. This has been done often enough. But there are new — or at least more obvious — factors which we must discuss in the following pages.

### *Disintegration*

The first of these is the disintegration of the Christian Democrats who have formed the backbone of government since 1945, and whose present weakened state may be likened to decalcification in a human being. It produces extreme fragility. This weakened state is due to a number of causes.

As we see it, the most important is the existence within the movement of a faction that would like to see a direct agreement made with the Communists to the effect that they — the PCI — would first join the majority group of Parties and then participate in the government. This Christian Democrat Left, generally associated with the Minister of Labour, Sr. Donat-Cattin, is constantly growing. Directly or indirectly, it represents 25 per cent of the party. In various factions of the Italian Church, this kind of politics, unheard of only 10 years ago, meets not with explicit approval but with a refusal to condemn it categorically. And some Church leaders, at least in private, even admit that it is perhaps the surest way of gradually integrating Communism into the Government at

the least cost and with a minimum of risk. In France, in 1945 and since then, Mr. Pierre Cot and his friends thought the same.

### *PCI and Exercise of Power*

The second factor is the PCI's desire to hold power. Around 1930, Leon Blum in France made famous the well-known distinction — he was the first to formulate it — between the conquest and the exercise of power. He himself, in 1936 and 1947, did no more than exercise his power within the limits of the law like any "bourgeois" party leader. By different routes, the Italian Communists have arrived at formulas that are somewhat reminiscent of Blum's. They have realized that the revolutionary conquest of power in Italy, as in any Western European country, would be impossible. But they are determined not to be relegated to the opposition for ever. The only way to avoid this is to change their behaviour and politics enough so that they may be considered as possible allies in some future coalition government. Thus Wehnert, ex-Communist and leader of the German Socialist Party along with Brandt, led his Party to power by getting it away from a long-standing sectarian opposition policy and forcing it to accept second place in a coalition with the German Christian Democrats before attaining first place in another one with the Liberals. The SPD's (Social - Democratic Party of Germany) rise to power in Germany is perhaps more instructive in understanding Italian communist tactics than Allende's victory in Chile. For three years, they have insisted that they are a due - process - of - law, not a revolutionary party. They have repeated their declarations to that effect and adopted symbolic attitudes. They wanted to persuade all the other parties that they were independent of Moscow. Hence their disavowal of the armed intervention in Czechoslovakia, their attempts to maintain an equal balance between the USSR and China, their repeated condemnations of harsh Soviet attitudes towards intellectuals, Jews, and so on. They have tried to persuade the working



class that they favour independent unionism and that, if they were in power, union liberties, including the right to strike, would be respected.

As regards the Christian Democrats, they have practised an open-door policy and made concessions. Even on subjects as delicate as divorce or as important as regional power, they have been known to make broad concessions just to facilitate more comprehensive alliances at the national level. What we have said above concerning Christian-Democrat left-wing activities shows that such tactics have already produced results.

### *Communists and Civil Order*

When one speaks of the government party, one speaks of a party of civil order. The Communists in Italy have made repeated and difficult efforts to participate as little as possible in street violence in order to give the impression of being responsible men. Nevertheless, they have played a tight little game which may be summed up as follows: disorders are necessary to weaken the State, wear down successive governments and create the conditions prerequisite to political change. In that sense, the PCI stands to gain from violence and it is in its interest to foster it and see that it increases. But if it is to profit from violence, that is, if it is to appear to be the only party capable of putting an end to it and restoring order, it must not be seen as the originator of violence and so be compromised in the eyes of the public or of its future partners in political coalitions and new governments. We must admit that the Italian Communists have played this game masterfully and have completely succeeded in dissociating themselves from the extreme Left. There is the PCI on one side and the extreme Left on the other. Rising violence and weak government have led many Italians, not at all sympathetic with Communism, to ask themselves whether communist participation in the government would not be the lesser evil. We French, having lived through the May, 1968, riots, have seen how, faced with the leftist circus that was

paralyzing the country, a sector of public opinion (led by the bourgeoisie, as usual) little by little began to wonder whether in the end it might not be better to have a solid left government supported by the French Communist Party rather than to have the De Gaulle regime. Be that as it may, it is certainly true today that one associates the use of force to correct a situation first of all with the Communist Party. The experience we almost underwent in France should help us understand what goes on in the heads of many Italians who have had enough of disorders.

In Italy, in 1922, and in Germany, in 1933, this was how Fascism came to power. In Italy in 1971, many look to Communism to put the country back on its feet. This development can only be viewed as frightening. It is no surprise to those who are aware that any dictatorship is the penalty paid by democracies that surrender.

It is impossible to predict how the PCI intends to participate in the Government. It certainly hopes to join the coalition of Parties which make up the majority in Parliament. As usual, it will only do so on condition that those left-of-centre parties which are currently part of the majority, and which oppose the PCI, are eliminated. These are the Republican Party and the PSU (Unified Socialist Party), which is also the party of the President of the Republic. Therefore, in order for the PCI to support the Government, the PCI would have to get rid of its own opponents and reduce the coalition membership so that this included only the Christian Democrat Party and the PSI. The communist vote would still assure this restricted coalition of a huge majority in Parliament.

### *Respectability*

The PCI believes that the present initial phase, by succeeding in cloaking the PCI in the respectability it still lacks, and by persuading the electoral body that it will be the victor of tomorrow, would assure it of considerable gains in votes, seats and influence. It could then proceed to the second phase which would be that of sharing

Ministries in the government with the Christian Democrats. Monolithic Communism, the PCI believes, would then easily prevail over Catholic lack of unity. And that is how what is being called the "Council republic" would come into being. This is a meaningless expression, yet one which everyone uses to define a regime that would institute in papal Rome a government collaboration between the parties of De Gasperi and Togliatti, that is, between the earthenware and iron pots. A scheme calculated to make the former turn over in his grave and achieve the desires of the latter. As for Popes Pius XI and Pius XII, it would be better not to try to imagine what they would think of all this.

### *Socialist Demagoguery*

In concluding this discussion of the main forces that at present determine Italian political life, we must add a word on the PSI. It has never resigned itself to the break with the Communists effected by Pietro Nenni, who, for many years, had championed almost unconditional collaboration with them, even to the extent of condoning the worst crimes of Stalinism. Now, PSI influence backtracks slowly but surely. That is one of the reasons why the Christian Democrat leftist faction has decided to come to a direct understanding with the Communists, without socialist intervention—an arrangement not at all distasteful to the PCI, which despises the socialists in Italy as it does elsewhere.

This withdrawal on the part of the PSI, and its fear of being cut out by the Communists and Christian Democrats, have pushed it into a more and more extremist stance. *Avanti*, the PSI daily, is infinitely less stern in its statements concerning leftist excesses than *Unità*, the PCI organ. Extreme-right violence has conveniently appeared on the scene, allowing the PSI even better to camouflage the extreme Left's irresponsibility by attacking the MSI. While the government and even the PCI are up in arms against the violence of both extremes, the PSI denounces

only the extreme Right. In its own way and in keeping with the errors in judgment it has been committing for some time, it contributes, through its leftist infantilism, to the incitement of disturbances in the country and the weakening of the democratic government. Take, for example, its persistence in demanding that the forces of law and order be disarmed, which, without the slightest doubt, would be tantamount to turning Italy over to the rioters, but would allow the Socialists to refer to themselves as the staunchest of democrats.

Such is the political picture in Italy. The disorders and violence, the powerless Government, and the growing importance of the PCI's position and role in its rise to power. Perhaps those forces that could put a halt to this march into the abyss, exist, but they are still invisible.

### *Who Will Replace Saragat?*

Still, this presentation would be very incomplete, given the date of writing, if we omitted one important factor, the election of a new President of the Italian Republic before the end of the year.

It is a commonplace to say that in Italy, as in France during the Fourth Republic, the president is not very important. This is both true and false. The Gaullists discovered as much in their dealings with Vincent Auriol. The Italian Communists have just come to realize the same after seven years with Saragat. They elected him thinking that this would give them a hold over him, and everyone wondered whether Saragat would be able to maintain his independence from a Party that had played a decisive role in his election. In fact—and it certainly has not been an easy matter — he has made no real concessions to the Communists, and, during the last two or three years, he has even proved to be one of their most effective adversaries. The Communists have no compunction in saying that the head of the "crisis party" — that is, those who were ready to resort to general elections (which the PCI feared for reasons it would take too long to go

into here) — the PSU, the Republican Party, the entire Right, and the broad Christian Democrat front grouped about Rumor, Piccoli and Fanfani — was none other than the President of the Republic himself. Saragat was indeed in sympathy with the "crisis party". But he did not go all the way with them. At least, he never lifted a finger in favour of the Communists (except for a few unfortunate foreign policy declarations and unwise initiatives in the SIFAR affair involving the Italian secret service). PCI mistrust of Saragat offers indisputable testimony to that fact.

### *Possible Candidates*

There are several candidates to replace Saragat, and party policy and political life already revolve mainly about the candidacies for this election.

There is a PSI candidate, De Martino, vice-president of the Cabinet and Party president. He *was* far left, but this Neapolitan bourgeois, who enjoys life, would have no other ambition if elected than to enjoy a peaceful seven-year term. He would probably be very careful with the Communists. Before swinging their votes to him, they, having learned their lesson from Saragat, would look twice. Likewise, they would be opposed to the Republican leader, La Malfa, who in the course of the past few years has stressed his rejection of any compromise with them, thus adopting at a much later date the position his ex-colleague in the party, Randolfo Picciardi, had the foresight to assume.

There are two possible Christian Democrat candidates: Fanfani and Moro. Here, we enter into the most hidden corners of the labyrinth of Italian politics, venturing with care, but not blindly.

### *Fanfani*

President of the Senate and perhaps the most intelligent of all Italian politicians — De Gaulle was not mistaken — Fanfani, for the past two or three years, has adopted



a resolutely anti-communist attitude (in domestic affairs, of course; foreign policy is too evolved). He let it be known that he hoped for controls over the right to strike to be formalized in Articles 39 and 40 of the Constitution; and he did not conceal his desire to maintain the status quo of the left-of-centre formula by keeping the Communists out of the coalition. Therefore, they oppose him, mistrusting him as they would a man capable of dealing with the Soviets over their heads in order to gain a little room to manoeuvre in the event that the regime should move toward the granting of greater presidential power, which he favours. Hence, the accusations of "Christ-Gaullism", a rather bizarre coinage, grossly exaggerated, but plain enough. Probably because in Italy nothing is ever carried through to completion in politics, Fanfani, quite determined in 1968 and 1969, appeared to be a bit less so in 1970. The ousting of Rumor and Piccolo, committed along with him against the Communists, and the entry of Colombo, always more reserved with him, produced hesitation on his part in the final analysis. But it appears that the Communists remain categorically opposed to him — if "categorically" can have any meaning in Roman politics.

On the other hand, it seems these same Communists may be more favourably disposed toward Aldo Moro, present Minister of Foreign Affairs and one of the chief partisans of the "opening to the left". For several years, Moro has been undergoing a gradual evolution. Today, he is the one among all the leaders of the Christian Democrats who is closest to the stand taken by the left wing of the Party, yet — prudence being the better part of wisdom — without being the head of that faction. He is a sad man whose sole interest is politics, a sort of real professional, and, in that sense, fairly close to the thinking of the communist leaders.

### *Opening-to-the-Left*

Moro is without a doubt committed to the idea of direct and gradual rapprochement between the Christian

Democrats and the PCI. Thus, he hopes to renew and develop his opening-to-the-Left policy, and, on that issue, his stance agrees with that of the Communists. In the domain of foreign policy, he wants to improve Italy's relations with the Eastern nations, which is consonant with the trips he has taken. But unlike Fanfani, he would achieve this policy with the aid of the PCI since he lacks the necessary boldness to do so without it. In view of the circumstances, it is easy to understand why, at this moment, the PCI would rather have Moro than Fanfani in the Presidential Palace, the Quirinal.

Needless to say, between now and the year's end, candidates can be changed. But those just discussed seem to be the most likely, and the communist attitude toward one or another of them is based on objective factors which will not change. The PCI will vote for the one it thinks will afford it the best chance to participate as broadly as possible in the political leadership of the country, at first as a member of the majority group, and later, by sharing government posts. Everything else is nothing but denouement and yesterday's news. With that in mind, it is easy to understand the reasons behind government and opposition hesitation. What do Saragat, Colombo, Fanfani, Moro and De Martino really have in common that would permit them to take a firm stand against the mounting anarchy and the advances of the PCI? And that Party which wants both to encourage disorders to weaken the government and yet to be regarded as the staunchest supporter of civil order, how will it find a simple enough way of pushing its advances on a broad front?

Italy can only expect to see the growth of confusion and the gradual dissolution of all authority. It is at the mercy of an unexpected, unpredictable situation that is suddenly wiping out all the carefully laid plans of both sides. It can also go on letting itself be engulfed, in as much as there exists a sufficiency of economic prosperity which, lulling them to sleep, keeps the Italians from wanting to reform their institutions and from realizing the dangers

that threaten their country. With every passing day, the situation gets worse, thus opening new avenues of action to the PCI. If the Government does not have any real success in repressing the present disturbances in the North and in the South, it will have heavily mortgaged the future and lessened even more the pitiful amount of room to manoeuvre that remains. Italy is not Chile, but, in its own way, it may yet wind up with a regime that will be comparable to the extreme Left, whether communist or not.

At that point, Italians will ask themselves whether the communist takeover of the government is to be permanent or not. But by then it will be a bit late to wonder — witness Chile at this very moment.

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## Two Italian Records

In 1971 Italians were reminded by the publication of two surveys that they held two European records: one is the number of workmen killed while doing their jobs — 4,000 workers lost their lives last year, and 5,000 on the average were injured every day. And the other record is for strikes. For the decade 1960-69 the number of working days lost through strikes rose from being 1.3 times greater than days lost by other Common Market countries combined to 13 times greater in 1969. E.L.W.

# The New Pension Plan

J. M. JACKSON

**I**T is impossible to write on the recent government proposals for a new pension scheme without the feeling that this has all happened before. There is now quite a history of pension proposals. We have had the proposals of the Labour Party for a National Superannuation Scheme while they were in opposition, the graduated pension scheme introduced by the Conservative government in the early 1960s, and the firm plans of the last Labour government which lapsed with its defeat at the polls. The latest plan was revealed in a white paper published in September 1971. This plan would come into operation in 1975. There will, of course, be a general election before that date. This means that a change of government might well delay even longer progress in this important area of social policy.

## *Possible Forms of Pension Scheme*

There are three types of pension scheme which might be operated by the government. The original state pension scheme was one which gave a flat rate pension to participants. An alternative to this would be an earnings related scheme. The third possibility is a combination of the two. This is the present situation, though it must be stated clearly that the graduated pension scheme does not in practice provide significant earnings-related benefits in addition to the basic flat-rate pension. The scheme proposed by the last Labour government was entirely income-related, although the pension was 60 per cent of the pensioner's earnings up to half the level of national average earnings and 25 per cent of his earnings over that level and up to one and a half times the national average. This meant that the final pension would have

been higher in proportion to earnings for the lower paid worker. With contributions at a uniform percentage of earnings, this meant that the lower paid worker was being subsidised by the higher.

There are also a number of ways in which a pension scheme can be financed. Contributions may be a flat-rate. In practice, a flat-rate contribution could only be employed in conjunction with a flat-rate benefit. It would clearly be inequitable to charge everybody the same contribution and then give a pension related to income. This would be a case of the poor subsidising the better-off. If pensions are to be related to income, it follows that contributions must be related to income also. It would, of course, also be possible to use a combination of flat-rate and income-related contributions. The present proposal is for a mixture of flat-rate and income-related pensions and it might seem natural to finance this by means of a mixture of flat-rate and income-related contributions. The government, however, is in fact proposing to finance the flat-rate pension by means of an income-related contribution. The lower paid worker will therefore get the same state pension as a higher paid worker for a smaller (absolute) contribution.

The plan of the last Labour government was to bring everybody into a scheme which would have given a man on the national average wage a pension on retirement of just over 40 per cent of his normal earnings (plus a flat-rate allowance for his wife unless she were entitled to more than this on the basis of her own contributions). There was provision for contracting out, subject to the independent pension scheme providing an adequate standard of benefit. The present proposal is quite different. The flat-rate scheme remains and everyone will have to participate. The income-related 'reserve pension' scheme will be available for those who need it. In other words, Labour offered a single scheme, but one which, subject to stringent conditions, one could contract out of. The Conservative scheme is in two parts, and there is no contracting out of the flat-rate part of it, but it will be



rather easier to contract out of the income-related part. It will be much easier for independent pension schemes to provide benefits equivalent to those offered by the government's reserve pension whereas it might have been difficult to match the benefits offered under the Labour plan.

### *Pay as you Go*

The difference is partly a matter of whether the pension scheme is to be on a pay as you go basis or actuarially sound. A pay as you go scheme relies upon the power of the government to make levies on those currently working in order to meet its current pension liabilities. The Labour plan was essentially pay as you go. There was, admittedly, a transition period in which pensions would be a mixture of the existing flat-rate scheme and the new income-related scheme. The details of the scheme were such, however, that the pensions rose during the transitional period at a faster rate than could be justified on strict actuarial principles. The transitional period itself was shorter than would have been justified on the same principles, so that people qualifying for the full new pension at the end of the transitional period would not have earned that pension in the actuarial sense. Moreover, it was clear that the rate of contribution would have had to increase by the end of the transitional period. The initial rate of contribution was set lower than the rate needed to meet pension obligations in the long run. The government of that day was selling a scheme which offered many people now at work substantially better pensions than the present flat-rate ones when they came to retire, but pensions which could only be paid if the next generation of workers were ready to pay a higher rate of contribution than the pensioners had accepted.

If a scheme is actuarially sound, the pensioner can be said in some sense to have *earned* his pension. In an actuarially sound scheme, the rate of contribution is fixed in such a way that the worker (on average) pays in

contributions a sum that is sufficient to provide his pension on retirement. If a man is entitled to a pension of £1,000 a year when he retires at 65, he and his employer should have paid in contributions a sum that will provide by the time he retires a capital of something like £10,000. This is roughly the sum that is needed to purchase an annuity of £1,000 a year at 65.\*

The new proposal, therefore, offers a flat-rate scheme that will be financed by means of a percentage contribution, thereby providing a substantial element of subsidisation for the lower paid workers. This can be justified on the ground that the flat-rate scheme is essentially pay as you go. Many people who will retire in the future (and not just the near future but perhaps for the next twenty years or so) will have had no opportunity to join an adequate pension scheme. The flat-rate scheme *has been* pay as you go and must remain so. As long as those due to retire in the next twenty years are to get something comparable to the present flat-rate pension, those still at work when they retire must pay the appropriate contributions; and, of course, those at work during the next twenty years must continue to provide the money out of which pensions will be paid to those already over retirement age. But the income-related part of the scheme is to relate the pension much more strictly to the contributions paid. The contributions paid into the reserve pension scheme will go into a special fund and pensions will be strictly related to the contributions paid and to the period of membership of the scheme.

There is here an important difference from the proposals put forward by the Labour party when in power. Their proposal was that the benefits would be based on the worker's life average earnings, and since contributions

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\* The capital sum of £10,000 will be achieved through a combination of contributions and compound interest accumulating on the funds held in trust. The annuity will be offered by an insurance company on the assumption that a man at 65 has a certain expectation of life, that it will pay him his annuity each year and continue to draw interest on the the capital sum it has received in exchange for the annuity. As time goes on, the capital is used up and less interest is earned. By the time a man has reached the average life expectation the capital will have been exhausted.

were proportional to earnings it follows that the pension would, in fact, also be proportional to contributions and to contributions only. But consider what happens if a man belongs to a pension scheme for 10 years and another belongs to it for 40. If contributions accumulate at 5 per cent compound interest, a man who pays £100 a year in contributions will find that in ten years his contributions will accumulate to a total of £1,258. One who pays £100 a year for 40 years will find they accumulate to £12,080. He will have paid four times as much in contributions, but the sum accumulated as a result of compound interest on these contributions is about ten times as much. The Labour scheme would have given the man who was in the scheme 40 years just four times as much as the man who had been in ten years; it would have made no allowance for any accumulation of compound interest.\* The present proposal will give substantially bigger pensions to those who have been in the scheme for long periods.\*\*

### *How Adequate are the New Pensions?*

What kind of pension will the new scheme give workers within the foreseeable future? Clearly it is in the nature of the proposals that there will be no benefit for those already retired. The basic pension is now £6 a week for a single man. By the time the new scheme comes into operation it will no doubt be higher but it may not increase significantly in relation to average earnings. We can, therefore, assume that wages and pensions remain at their present levels for illustrative purposes. The contributions under the new scheme and the income-related pension will

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\* This was, perhaps, inevitable since the scheme was pay as you go. There would have been surpluses for investment in the early years but there would have been a substantial deficit on the proposed contributions before the end of the transition period and liabilities would still have been increasing at the end of that period with little increase in contributions.

\*\*A man joining the state scheme at 55 will get a pension that is roughly 4 per cent of his average earnings but one entering at 25 (i.e. contributing for 40 years instead of 10) will get a pension of 34 per cent of his earnings, this is 8½ times that of the man joining at 55. This would correspond with an assumption that contributions accumulate at 4 per cent compound interest.

operate on earnings up to one and a half times the national average. This is probably now around £30 a week, though the illustrative figures in the white paper stop at £42 a week, that is it assumes a level of £28 a week for average earnings; I shall use the £30 a week figure to make some of the arithmetic a little easier.

The basic pension of £6 a week for a single man represents about 20 per cent of his normal earnings if he is in fact on the national average earnings. If he joins the reserve pension scheme at 55, he will get in addition to the basic pension an income-related pension of roughly 4 per cent of his income. This would give him another £1.20, bringing his total pension to £7.20 or about 24 per cent of earnings. Now look at the position of a single man whose earnings have been £15 a week and one with £45 a week. Both will get the £6 basic pension, but one will get a reserve pension of 60p and the other £1.80 a week. The low paid worker will get a pension that represents about 44 per cent of his earnings whereas the man at the ceiling of the scheme will only get about 17 per cent. The higher paid worker will at this stage suffer a much bigger drop in his standard of living if he is solely dependent on the state scheme. The presence of a flat-rate basic pension means that this will always be the case to some extent, though it will be much less marked as time goes on. However, if we look not at the pension as a proportion of normal earnings but in relation to the level of Supplementary Benefit, the picture is different. According to the white paper, the level of rents is such that on average the single person drawing supplementary benefit gets a total of £8 a week, about £2 more than the basic pension. Even the man on the average wage of £30 a week will only get £7.20 under the pension scheme if he is 55 when he enters and retires at 65. The £45 a week man, even, would only get £7.80 and so would often fall below the Supplementary Benefit scale. Let us look at the matter another way. How long will it be before a man earning the average figure of £30 a week can expect

to retire on a pension at least equal to the present supplementary benefit scale? He needs another £2 over and above the basic pension or an extra sum equal to 6.6 per cent of his average earnings. The tables in the white paper are not sufficiently detailed to give a definite answer to this question, but it would seem that it will be necessary for a man to contribute for 15 years before he can get this addition to his basic pension. In other words, the man who is 50 when the scheme comes into operation in 1975 will get a bare subsistence pension when he retires in 1990. Anyone retiring earlier will still need to apply for supplementary benefit if he has no other source of income than his pension.

### *Conclusion*

There are other aspects of the scheme that could be discussed. The main points to be stressed, however, are that in itself the scheme will do nothing for those already retired. Nevertheless, if contributions are set at a percentage of earnings, this should provide increasing funds as time goes on. The basic pension should be able to rise in proportion to national average earnings and not merely maintain its present purchasing power. (The one thing that would prevent this is the increasing proportion of old people in the population, though it should still be possible to permit some increase in the purchasing power of the basic pension as time goes on.) Secondly, the reserve scheme may ultimately provide a not unreasonable pension, but it will be a good many years before it gives the majority of people a pension equal to what they would get on supplementary benefit. Nevertheless, this is probably the right way to tackle the problem. There is really no justification for the kind of scheme the Labour government proposed where the benefits promised could only have been maintained if subsequent generations of workers were prepared to accept a higher level of contributions than the pensioners themselves had paid.



Is it true that the Church allows the practice of contraception in special circumstances? Why is it that so many humanists concerned with the welfare of their fellow-men are the strongest advocates of abortion and euthanasia? Are four-day cricket test matches justifiable?

## Any Questions?

WILLIAM LAWSON, S.J.

Is it true that the Church allows the practice of contraception in special circumstances?

No. It is not true at all. The prohibition of contraceptive practices is absolute. In all the teaching of the Church, and most recently in the two encyclicals, *Casti Connubii* of Pius XI and *Humanae Vitae* of Paul VI, those practices have been condemned, as wrong in themselves and contrary to the law of God. The Church, need it be said?, has no power to change that law; and what is wrong in itself cannot be made good by circumstances. You may have been misled by the reminders given, after the publication of *Humanae Vitae*, of the understanding which confessors, for example, should have of circumstances which reduce the culpability of wrong-doers. A long-established habit — of lying, thieving, drinking too much alcohol — is hard to break. It greatly diminishes freedom of decision and therefore the imputability of actions. A habit of contraception, or serious difficulties of health or finance, could diminish the freedom, and the guilt, of Catholics adopting the forbidden practices.

They are, however, not impulsive actions, as lying, thieving and drinking can easily be, but as deliberate as the effort required to take a course of contraceptive pills.

Decisions maintained over a long time are likely to be more culpable than impulses. Even so, as pressures can be very strong indeed, a willingness at least to try to accept and put into practice the authoritative teaching of the Church could open the way to the reception of absolution and Holy Communion. That is by no means to say that contraception is right. One would not say to a compulsive liar or gambler or drinker or thief that he is a special case and is morally free to lie or gamble or drink or steal as much as he likes.

Why is it that so many humanists who are sincerely concerned for the welfare of their fellow-men are also the strongest advocates of abortion and euthanasia which destroy their fellow-men?

The reason is simple: they just do not know their fellow-man. To them he is matter and nothing more. They use the word "person", but it does not mean to them what it means to us, a being possessed of a spiritual soul and therefore with a life beyond time. They are all for the happiness of the greatest number; but happiness is temporal only: it must be enjoyed, if at all, in this world, for there is no other. On those premises, it is logical for them to want to rid the world of those they judge incapable of happiness, or, to put it more kindly, to take the burden of life from those whose physical or mental state precludes them from enjoying life. There is an obvious danger that they could join forces with the extreme eugenicists and press for compulsory liquidation of the very young and the very old whose life is judged to be not worth living — all in the cause of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. An even greater danger lies in the proneness of a growing majority to let the humanists have their head. The ideas of spiritual life, immortality, and responsibility to God are all fading, so that only traces of them remain in most minds. The

prophets of materialism can count on the apathy of the masses when they propound their recipes for human betterment.

Talk of the value of the human person is empty unless the talker knows what he is talking about. The meaning of a Declaration of the Rights of Man depends on what the declarer understands man to be. The Church knows from God what man is, and she is his best defender.

**Are cricket Test Matches justifiable — four or five days just playing a game ?**

There are some who would question your description of a cricket Test Match as a game. For serious cricketers — and how serious they can be ! — cricket at that level is more of a moral exercise or a liturgical movement. For spectators who like their entertainment to be brisk and lively, Test Match cricket is on a par with a tedious ballet, in slow motion. Both views, extreme though they are, can be illustrated at one and the same time in the radio commentaries on a match, which are half the display of pearls from the sacred history of cricket and half an account of the action — some of it batting, bowling and fielding, and the rest make-weight trivialities about changing sweaters or tying boot-laces. But, opinions on cricket apart, skill at ball games is admirable, acquiring it and using it for the entertainment of others is reasonable, and there is nothing dishonourable about making a living at games which the public pay to watch. Actors who spend their working lives rehearsing and putting on plays do a public service (if the plays are good) and deserve to be paid for it.

Doubts begin to arise when the playing of a game takes up most of the week. Cricket, as far as I know, is the only game which occupies so much of the time of its devotees that they are debarred from any other serious occupation.

I should have thought that part-time athletics were more human than full-time, and that, were it not for the

commercializing of sport (and the special nature of cricket) the ideal for the expert would be part-time professionalism, as in Rugby League — and I bet the entertainment would be as good — as in Rugby League !

**A priest on supply in my parish after doing a course, in the U.S.A., in religious education, says "the Ten Commandments are out". Can you think of an orthodox interpretation of his words ?**

Not knowing the priest or the context of his statement, I have no right to an opinion of his motives and meaning. One could suppose — but it takes an effort — that he was commenting on the negative form of most of the Ten Commandments preparatory to putting them in positive terms, as particular instances of the keeping of the commandment to love God and our fellow-men. Even if that were the priest's purpose and meaning — and it seems a forced explanation — one could wonder at the irresponsibility of the remark, especially as so many Catholics are shocked by much that is thrown in their faces as Catholic doctrine. They could hardly be blamed for thinking that the priest was saying there is no law against murder, adultery, false witness and theft, and no natural obligation to worship God. They might, also, be inclined to ask what the priest made of Our Lord's saying that He had come to fulfil the law, not to abolish it.

Some priests and their followers have started a fashion of asserting that the natural law has changed, i.e. that we are not the same *kind* of being as those who came under the natural law propagated by Moses and confirmed by Christ: the new human nature differs in some essentials from the old. They could pertinently be asked which nature was assumed and redeemed by Christ. How, also, do they reconcile their theory with the claim of the teaching Church to declare what human nature is and what behaviours are incumbent on it? And, in any case,

what precisely are the essential changes in human nature which have made the Ten Commandments invalid?

I'm told you use terms like "Christian bread" and "Christian cheese". Isn't that even more prejudiced than talking about Christian mathematics or physics?

What you have been told is true. Furthermore, I am quite prepared to use terms like "Christian mathematics" and to try and justify my use of them. There would be a certain provocativeness and extravagance in calling mathematics or physics or history or geography "Christian", because those disciplines are in a sense neutral; but, even here, one could reasonably argue that Christian judgments of the right use of the natural sciences — for human betterment and not to damage mankind — should be accepted as a guide to research and as decisive in practice. As to history, it is always an interpretation, and not just a collection of facts; and no interpretation can be sound which ignores the place of Christ in history.

There is less extravagance in the use of the adjective "Christian" to describe food and drink. Christians, above all, should be respectful of the goods of the universe which were made by God. A large element of respect is the use of things according to their nature. That is a principle that no workshop would deny. Each tool has a particular purpose, implicit in its construction, and it should be used for that purpose and for that purpose only. A tool so used will give good service and will last longer. The purpose of food and drink is to nourish and to be tasty in the way. Many foods, through ignorance or disrespect, have lost much of their power of nourishing and most of their taste. Bread and cheese are, in this country, notoriously bad examples of that loss. Time was when one could make a good meal of them, but not now, unless one takes great trouble to buy bread and cheese which have not been denatured, but which are what I shall continue to call "Christian".



# Book Review

## HUMANAE VITAE DEFENDED

**Papal Magisterium and "Humanae Vitae"** by Father Joseph F. Costanzo, S.J.; a Crux Publication obtainable from Peter McDonald, 254 Leigh Road, Worsley Walkden M28 4Lf, Lancs, 13np (post free); pp. 35

This is a most excellent pamphlet and Peter McDonald and Crux have done us all the greatest possible service in publishing it. It ought to serve as an excellent and well-timed antidote to Norman St. John Stevas' *The Agonising Choice*, which received, as was to be expected, euphoric reviews in the secular and Catholic Press. As likely as not Father Costanzo's pamphlet will be ignored by both; which is a pity, because an intelligent reading of it will remove some of the doubts that may have been nagging at the minds of a good many Catholics ever since the controversy which broke round *Humanae Vitae* as soon as it was published. And, with the removal of doubt, confidence will come. And, with confidence, the opinion of those who have always been in support of *Humanae Vitae* will begin to prevail.

The trouble so far has not been with any intrinsic weakness in the Encyclical's argument. It has lain, rather, in the slickness with which the Encyclical's opponents have presented their arguments against it. They were very quick into the attack and were accorded excellent publicity. Under these circumstances, it was difficult for the defenders of the Pope to cope; all the more so in view of the fact that the Catholic Press insisted on treating the matter as an open question despite the fact that the truth of it had been taught by the Holy Father in the Encyclical. This, to say the very least, was nothing less than marked disloyalty towards the Holy See.

Moreover, and with respect, very little help was received by the Faithful from their Bishops during the whole of this time. With noble exceptions, like that of the Scots, a large number of National Hierarchies showed themselves painfully backward in coming forward in support of the Holy Father. Their attitude seems to me from their public statements to have been somewhat close to that described by Father Costanzo in his booklet and attributed by him to a group whose opinion he describes as lying mid-way between those who accept the Encyclical as binding in conscience and the dissidents who challenge its obligatory force: "On the one hand", he writes, "they insist that they do give deference and loyalty to papal authority and, on the other, they try to mitigate the literal and explicit absoluteness of the proscriptions of *Humanae Vitae*. They do this either by (i) refusing to take seriously the dogmatic language in which the doctrinal teaching is unambiguously expressed, or by (ii) weakening the binding force of the doctrinal propositions by an evaluation of the merits of the intrinsic argumentation of the encyclical, or by (iii) mitigating the condemnations of contraceptive intercourse in the light of the pastoral counsels set down by Pope Paul in the third and concluding part of the encyclical. This third group differentiates itself from the outright dissident clerics by maintaining that *Humanae Vitae* gave expression to a prudent, positive, ennobling ideal which the spouses should strive to realise in their conjugal relations. In other words, they seem to say, Pope Paul did not authoritatively propound an authentic doctrinal teaching on marital relations to be followed in the daily lives of the married. This ingenious construction, we respectfully submit, can work to an earnest self-deception. It does violence to the language of moral condemnations of the encyclical and, as a principle of interpretative exegesis, will work no less havoc with other doctrinal teachings of the Church".

I do not know whether Father Costanzo had in mind the statements on the Encyclical of some National

Hierarchies when he wrote this passage. Whether he did or not, it appears to me accurately to depict the basic endeavour behind some of them; an endeavour which he shows as entirely misplaced when, in his pamphlet, he goes on to criticise this third-group opinion — already described in the quotation above — brilliantly and at considerable length. I found this just about the most satisfactory section of an extremely satisfactory pamphlet.

Naturally enough, of course, those whom Father Costanzo rightly refers to as the “dissident clerics” were quick to take refuge in the statements of those National Hierarchies which appeared, at least, “to mitigate the literal and explicit absoluteness of the proscriptions of *Humanae Vitae*”. And, naturally enough, they sought added strength for their position by invoking a bogus interpretation of episcopal collegiality to give strength to what they chose to think of as valid episcopal teaching in mitigation of the Encyclical. With this bogus interpretation of collegiality Father Costanzo deals well and effectively in his booklet. In fact, his purpose throughout its pages is to counteract what he calls “a constellation of arguments enunciated by the dissident clerics who have denied the obligatory force of the encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, upon the conscience of spouses”. He has succeeded extraordinarily well. I know no-one who has done a better job.

There is a small but necessary point with which to conclude. This pamphlet needs to be studied carefully and closely. It is not easy reading. cursory reading will get no-one anywhere with it. Quiet concentrated attention given to its pages will prove immensely rewarding.

Paul Crane, S.J.

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### The Rationalist and God

The Rationalist makes himself his own centre, not his Maker; he does not go to God, but he implies that God must come to him (*Essays Critical and Historical*, 31-32-33, J. H. Newman).